

# Italian Andrea Giani Nominated for Iran Volleyball Job



*Andrea Giani*

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Italian coach and retired volleyball player Andrea Giani has been nominated to take charge of the Iranian national volleyball team.

The 46-year-old coach has been considered as a replacement for Raul Lozano in Iran volleyball team.

The Iranian federation has already

negotiated with Italian coaches Andrea Anastasi and Mauro Berruto, Argentine Javier Webb, Bulgarian Radostin Stoychev and Serbian Igor Kolakovic.

Giani was appointed as coach of the Slovenia men's national volleyball team in May 2015 and led the team to victory in the European Volleyball League, which secured them a spot at the 2016 FIVB Volleyball World League.

In October Slovenia unexpectedly won their first medal on a major volleyball tournament, after reaching the Final of the 2015 Men's European Volleyball Championship where they were defeated by France.

Giani scored numerous successes in the 1990s, including three World Championships with his national team.

He is considered as one of the best volleyball players ever, and surely the most versatile one: Giani was an all-rounder able to play both as outside hitter and as middle blocker, but he played several times as opposite.

## Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors Ineligible for AFC Champions League 2017



*Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors Football Club logo*

KUALA LUMPUR (AFC) - The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) independent Entry Control Body on Wednesday decided that Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors (KOR) are ineligible to participate in AFC

competitions for the 2017 season due to its indirect involvement in activities aimed at arranging or influencing the outcome of matches during the 2013 and 2014 K League seasons.

Such indirect involvement was found to be in contravention of Article 11.8 of the Entry Manual for the AFC Club Competitions 2017-2020. As such, Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors (KOR) was deemed not to have met the sporting criteria to participate in the AFC Champions League 2017.

The body subsequently ordered that Jeju United FC (KOR) shall be the third seed and Ulsan Hyundai (KOR) the fourth seed representing the Korea Football Association in the AFC Champions League 2017.

The Korea Football Association and all directly affected clubs, as well as all participating Member Associations and their affiliated clubs, have been notified of the decision.

The AFC will not make any further comment.

## Murray, Federer, Kerber, Venus Williams Through to Third Round at Australian Open

MELBOURNE (Japan Today) — When Andy Murray tumbled to the court, clutching his right ankle, the top of the men's draw at the Australian Open momentarily took on a new complexion.

Top-ranked Murray, a five-time runner-up at Melbourne Park, was leading his second-round match comfortably Wednesday night when his right shoe caught on the surface in the third game of the third set, and he rolled awkwardly on the ground.

He continued and won that game, talking to himself, saying "It's not good news." He saw a trainer during the next change of ends, but decided he didn't need any extra treatment on his already heavily strapped foot.

Murray went on to win 6-3, 6-0, 6-2 against No. 156-ranked Andrey Rublev, later saying "It's a little bit sore — not too serious." "I was moving OK toward the end, so that's positive," he said.

It was Murray's 178th win in a Grand Slam match, joining Stefan Edberg at equal eighth on the list of match winners in the Open era. The 19-year-old Rublev's first-round win here was his first in a major tournament.

Murray next faces No. 31 Sam Querrey, who had 7-6 (5), 6-0, 6-1 win over 17-year-old wild card Alex De Minaur.

Roger Federer's progress was more straight forward, beating 20-year-old qualifier Noah Rubin 7-5, 6-3, 7-6 (3) to maintain his record of never failing to reach the third round at the 18 Australian Opens he's contested.

After back-to-back wins over



*Japan's Kei Nishikori celebrates after defeating France's Jeremy Chardy in their second round match at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne on Wednesday.*

qualifiers, the degree of difficulty in the 17-time Grand Slam winner's comeback from a six-month injury layoff will increase exponentially. Next up, Federer faces 2010 Wimbledon finalist Tomas Berdych, who had a 6-3, 7-6 (6), 6-2 win over Ryan Harrison.

Also looming, potentially, is No. 5 Kei Nishikori, the 2014 U.S. Open finalist, who set up a third-round match against Lukas Lacko with a 6-3, 6-4, 6-3 win over Jeremy Chardy.

They're all in the same quarter of the draw as Murray.

U.S. Open champion Stan Wawrinka advanced 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 over Steve Johnson and will next play No. 29 Viktor Troicki in the lower quarter of the top half of the draw.

No. 19 John Isner, the highest-seeded U.S. player in the men's draw, lost to Mischa Zverev 6-7 (4), 6-7 (4), 6-4, 7-6 (7), 9-7 and followed Johnson, Rubin and

Harrison out. Wins by No. 23 Jack Sock and Querrey ended the day on a more positive note for the American men.

No. 7 Marin Cilic and No. 14 Nick Kyrgios were beaten in night matches. Cilic lost in four sets to Daniel Evans, and No. 89-ranked Andreas Seppi rallied from two sets down and saved a match point to beat Kyrgios 1-6, 6-7 (1), 6-4, 6-2, 10-8 in a seesawing match that featured a high-risk, between-the-legs shot from the enigmatic Australian.

Defending champion Angelique Kerber celebrated her 29th birthday with a 6-2, 6-7 (3), 6-2 second-round win over Carina Witthoeft.

The crowd sang her "Happy Birthday," although she wasn't entirely on song. The No. 1-ranked Kerber angrily swiped her racket in the second set in a burst of frustration that momentarily threw her off her game.

She had two double-faults in the

tiebreaker, as Witthoeft leveled the match, but regained control in the third.

Kerber planned to celebrate over dinner, then get back to work before Friday's third-round match against Kristyna Pliskova, who beat No. 27 Irina-Camelia Begu 6-4, 7-6 (8). Pliskova's twin sister, Karolina, lost the U.S. Open final to Kerber.

Speaking of age, Venus Williams had to field questions about getting older after an energetic performance in her 6-3, 6-2 win over Stefanie Voegele.

The 36-year-old, seven-time major winner played the first of her record 73 Grand Slam tournaments at the French Open in 1997.

"It's an honor and privilege to start that young," she added, laughing, "and play this old."

Venus and Serena Williams, who have won 14 major doubles titles together, withdrew from a scheduled first-round doubles match later Wednesday, citing an injury to Venus' right elbow.

In her next singles match, Venus will play Duan Yingying, who beat Varvara Lepchenko 6-1, 3-6, 10-8. In other third-round matches, two-time major winner Svetlana Kuznetsova will meet former No. 1-ranked Jelena Jankovic, No. 11 Elina Svitolina will take on No. 24 Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, and Eugenie Bouchard, who reached the semifinals here and the Wimbledon final in 2014, will play CoCo Vandeweghe.

French Open champion Garbine Muguruza beat Samantha Crawford 7-5, 6-4 in a night match, and Mona Barthel beat Olympic gold medalist Monica Puig.

## Germany Power Past Saudi Arabia to Reach Last 16



*The European champions reached the knockout stages of the men's World Handball Championship*

BERLIN (Deutsche Welle) - The European champions reached the knockout stages of the men's World Handball Championship with two matches to spare. They easily defeated the Saudis 38-24 in France.

Steffen Fäth was the standout player for the Germans with six goals as they cantered into the last 16 in France.

The Saudis, seen as one of the weakest teams in the competition, had made a bright start but the Germans quickly imposed themselves and were 21-13 up at the break.

Germany were quicker, stronger and more creative than their opponents in front of 3,700 fans in Rouen but were never seriously tested.

"It was difficult for us to keep our concentration," said Coach Dagur Sigurdsson.

"We have to try to get our competition rhythm back." There was one moment of angst

for Germany when goalkeeper Andreas Wolff, widely regarded as one of the best in the world, slumped to his knees after a save and was left limping.

However, the coach played down the extent of the injury.

"I think it is just a knock. Hopefully he will be fine."

They next face Belarus on Wednesday and Group C rivals Croatia on Friday. Top spot in the group is now up for grabs and is important for the seeding in the knockout phase.

Germany are currently first with six points and three wins from three having also dispatched Hungary and Chile earlier in the tournament. But Croatia are also on six points and are always dangerous opponents.

In other results on Tuesday, holders and hosts France got past Russia 35-24, Norway beat Brazil 39-26, Poland defeated Japan 26-25, Slovenia drew with Tunisia 28-28, Iceland beat Angola 33-19 and Qatar outdid Argentina 21-17.

## Antonio Set to Sign New Contract Worth £70,000 a Week

LONDON (The Guardian) - Michail Antonio is set to sign a five-and-a-half year contract at West Ham worth £70,000 a week as a reward for the impressive performances that have earned a call-up to the England squad. Antonio, who joined West Ham in September 2015 for around

£7m, agreed a four-year deal last summer having established himself as one of Slaven Bilic's key players by scoring eight Premier League goals.

The 26-year-old winger has carried on that form, already matching his tally from last season and providing all three assists for

West Ham in the 3-0 victory at Crystal Palace on Saturday.

That prompted the vice-chairman, Karren Brady, to pay tribute to the player who began his career at non-league Tooting & Mitcham in the week that Dimitri Payet told West Ham he wanted to leave. "Michail Antonio was in bed with

flu yesterday, got out of bed pulled on his shirt & played magnificently today — that's dedication for you," Brady wrote on Twitter.

It is understood interest from Chelsea prompted West Ham to secure Antonio on a long-term deal that doubles his salary of £35,000 a week.

## NBA Results

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Results from the NBA games on Tuesday (home team in CAPS)

Denver 127 LA LAKERS 121

SAN ANTONIO 122 Minnesota 114

Dallas 99 CHICAGO 98

Toronto 119 BROOKLYN 109

MIAMI 109 Houston 103